TEACHING ENGLISH TO THE ESL LEARNERS THROUGH LITERATURE USING STYLISTICS

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Abstract

This thesis entitled ***"Teaching English To The ESL Learners Through Literature Using Stylistics,"*** examines the applicability of the practical stylistics approach, the linguistic arena for teaching and understanding of literature to the weaker undergraduate learners who feel out of water without conventional bilingual methods and are habituated to memorize the themes and substances without realizing the pulse of the language. The inculcation of literary texts in teaching English to the second language learners (ESL) has already been popularly established as an effective pedagogical approach for its fruitfulness in enriching language learning experience through the authentic and contextually rich materials from diverse cultural practices it provides. Teaching English literature becomes farce where the learners cannot even understand a single complete sentence in English. Through the systematic investigation of stylistic devices from phono-stylistic, morpho-stylistic and stylo-syntactic perspectives this work intend to illustrate how potentially stylistics can bridge the gap between the linguistic form and aesthetic appeal of literature, fostering the minute dissection of language first and cherish literature later, thereby enhancing learners' multidimensional competence. Teaching and learning English as a Second Language (ESL) tries to bridge the gap by teaching learners the skills to understand, speak, read, and write English proficiently which is known as "communicative competence" introduced by Dell Hymes initially in his influential essay "On Communicative Competence" (1966).

The study begins by elucidating the theoretical framework of stylistics, reinforcing its potential to focus on how linguistic choices can tune meaning, tone, and style of expression of literary discourse. Investigating the pragmatic challenges faced by the ESL learners like lack of vocabulary, unknown syntactic structures, cross-cultural barriers, meagre knowledge on phonological or morphological aspects of language does not suffice; rather stylistics efficiently addresses the other required aspects too, including syntactic and semantic knowledge through

the easily accessible and more engaging linguistic patterns. This significance has been highlighted in the thesis by presenting the thorough analytical study of selected literary texts of various genres from among the LCC/AECC (Compulsory paper for learners of all disciplines) syllabus of leading Universities of West Bengal under CBCS System where mostly literary texts have been prescribed neglecting the need of the learners. In the given circumstances, the thesis demonstrates how diverse stylistic techniques i.e. evaluation of lexical choices with grammatical structures, and numerous figurative languages, can be applied to flourish learners' holistic language skills and critical thinking abilities. The strategic use of selected texts in language teaching helps learners to interpret meaning, understand the context of it, and develop critical thinking, making literature an effective tool in second language acquisition.

The research work highlights the growing demand of the time for more innovative and interdisciplinary approaches for teaching English language to the second language learners by incorporating the practical stylistic approach to advantage learners in the second language (L2) learning habits. By integrating rich, rhetorical language of literary texts, the study provides a more enjoyable language learning environment, motivating them to make the classroom an interactive session. This research bridges the gap between the methodologies for language and literature teaching, illustrating how incorporation of stylistics may prove fruitful in designing a unified curriculum with communicative competence-building activities. Practical stylistics as the branch of linguistics and literary studies, examines how language is used in different contexts, focusing on the relationship between linguistic form and its communicative function; several texts have been used in this work for analysis. It is an applied field of linguistics, emphasizing the analysis of language in real-world situations, literary texts, and various genres, combining theoretical principles with hands-on application.

The introductory chapter of the thesis elaborates the motivation of it which arises from the recognition that many ESL learners struggle to bridge the gap between functional language skills and the ability to engage with complex texts critically. Here is the detailed discussion on the background of the work, research problems, research gaps, research questions with the significance of the work. It also includes the brief description of each chapter. This chapter explains how literature, analyzed through stylistic techniques, can become an effective tool for improving learners' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

The second chapter of the thesis entitled Phono-stylistic Study, foregrounds the phono-stylistic interpretation of literature. It presents the important area of literary analysis, with emphasis on the sound and auditory effects that have a greater contribution to the meaning, tone, mood of the author and aesthetic appeal of the text. The scientific and systematic study of phonology and thorough investigation of various phonic elements of a literary text such as phonemes, rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, consonance, and onomatopoeia etc. shows how they help to comprehend it better.

As phonological and stylistic study are complementary to each other, both contribute to the holistic understanding of meaning, aesthetic enrichment and effect of a literary text. Phono-Stylistic Study can also lead in the structural analysis of poetry. The Study of various sound patterns in poetry-like foot, meter, stanzaic form and other organisation of the verse, can help to the prosodic analysis of it.

The third chapter Morpho-stylistic study contains a detailed study on the scope of morphology and critical analysis with significance of extracts from the selected prose texts. The scope of morphological study and analysis of a literary piece is very significant; it helps in denoting the several layers of meaning and emotional undertones embedded within words. While analyzing the literary texts, the morphological aspects of language are helpful as they function as an important device to explore the deeper meanings and the artistry of expression,

throwing light on how authors use particular language patterns and how they violate the norms of the language to achieve desired effects. In literature, words are of prime importance in the expression of meaning; they are the objects of literary craft, strategically employed by authors to promote the best effects. Study of morphology of a literary text, analysing the constituents of words—roots, prefixes, suffixes, inflections, and derivations— helps the readers to find out the history and etymology of a word. Doing this, readers can comprehend how the writers blend the traditional ideas with the contemporary one, or how the connotative meaning of a word may shift depending on its morphological structure. Morpho-stylistic devices like compounding, affixation, reduplication and various word formation processes etc. and their functions in language and literature have been illustrated in great detail with the extracts from among selected prose texts in this chapter.

The fourth chapter Syntactic Study from Stylistic Viewpoint focuses on how sentence structures can be taught from a stylo-syntactic viewpoint. In linguistic study Syntax and Stylistics are two basic aspects of language that often intersect and supplement one another. Syntax is the study of the rules of the sentence structure and arrangement of words properly in a sentence, while stylistics is the study that deals with the selection of language patterns used to create a particular tone, mood, or effect in a writing. The relationship between syntax and stylistics is profound and significant as both disciplines work hand in hand to pave the way to express ourselves and appreciate language. Another area where syntax and stylistics work together is in the use of the length of the sentence and complexity. Comparatively large sentences with subordinate and dependent clauses, can produce an impression of decent and complacency in a text. Contrarily, short and simple sentences can convey a sense of clarity and directness. These syntactic selections can influence the stylistic pattern with longer sentences often being used to convey complex ideas to build suspension while shorter ones may be utilized for stressing and creating dramatic effects.

In our present study this intersection of language, structure, style and meaning have been explored through the stylo-syntactic study. In an attempt to do this, the stylo-syntactic devices like parallelism, rhetorical and linguistic anaphora, antithesis, asyndeton, polysyndeton, hypotaxis, parataxis, paliologia, litotes, zeugma etc. proves very effective in significant meaning making have been studied from different literary texts and analysed stylistically thereby establishing how they can enhance the English knowledge of the non-native learners.

The concluding chapter of the thesis Education Policy and Syllabus Designing for ESL Learners from Stylistic Viewpoint offers how stylistic approaches can be very effective in designing English language and literature curriculum for undergraduate ESL students in India, by paying attention to the shifting role of English as a language (EAL) curriculum under the NEP 2020. Stylistics, as a branch, sheds light into literary techniques such as syntax, imagery, and narrative structure, and offers a powerful pedagogical tool, which altogether provides learning opportunities beyond developing literacy skills while imparting critical thinking skills, cultural awareness, and emotional intelligence. By interweaving governmental educational policies that mandate learner-centric strategies, this chapter shows how English language can be taught from a stylistic approach towards literature as it can act as an innovative form of creativity for nurturing eloquent, empathetic, and globally responsive individuals.

In this thesis, I have tried to show how stylistics can be used to teach English language to the ESL learners using literature and tried to shed light on a hybrid stylistic approach. This approach incorporates Tyler's model of structured objectives with Taba's interpretive flexibility model. In studying William Blake's The Tyger, it may be appropriate to analyze its rhyme and metaphor (product-oriented) but through creative writing, the richness of the symbolism gets revealed. This approach also emphasizes competency-based, interdisciplinary learning which fosters linguistic mastery, emotional intelligence, and critical creativity.

Literature is a tool for transformation. Literature helps learners to navigate complicated texts and ideas and become thoughtful, expressive individuals who can contribute to a global society.

The notable contribution of this research work is the development of a stylistic-based teaching learning framework especially designed for ESL learners. Highlighting the need for age-appropriate and culturally rich texts, these classroom activities motivate active engagement with linguistic aspects, fostering an interesting learning environment. It presents the teacher as a facilitator who leads the learners in unveiling multiple layers of meaning embedded in literary texts while simultaneously developing language skills.

This thesis advocates and attests that teaching English through literature using stylistics offers a dynamic and holistic approach to language learning. Through the integration of stylistics studies with the richness of literary writings, instructors can create a learning environment that is both intellectually sound and linguistically rewarding. The output of this work can be a practical guideline for ESL teachers, curriculum designers, and policymakers as well as to the future researchers reinforcing that stylistics-based teaching pedagogy can play a vital role by replacing the conventional techniques English is taught to non-native learners.

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